

have full health care, whether they remain in the service or they come out as veterans. In addition, I think it is important to add a \$1,000 bonus to combat veterans on returning, as they move into either their new lives or remain in the United States military.

I can truly say, Madam Speaker, that whether or not we agreed with the policies of the war in Iraq, as Members of the United States Congress and as Americans there was not one divide relating to our support for the United States military.

Even today, as we begin to analyze the aftermath of Iraq, in my meetings with Arab nations just a month or so ago, leaders of Arab nations, many of them offering to work with the United States in the rebuilding of Iraq, just a few days ago I had submitted into the defense authorization bill an amendment to ensure that small and medium-sized minority- and women-owned businesses are engaged in the opportunity of rebuilding Iraq. We realize that we have a responsibility to that nation, as well as to the troops on the ground.

We can also see that the war is really not over inasmuch as we are seeing the loss of our troops on a daily basis. There is much work to do to rebuild hospitals, roads, bridges, and neighborhoods in Baghdad and other places. We believe it is important to do it together.

But I think we have another challenge, Madam Speaker, that is extremely important. Madam Speaker, I recall the debate on the floor of the House. I stand by my vote. I believe that war should have been the last option and the U.N. inspectors should have been allowed to do their job.

But I know my colleagues who voted for the effort to go into Iraq did it out of conviction and the belief that this Nation was under imminent attack. Again, I say that we did not vote in the constitutional way because this Congress did not vote under article 1 to declare war. I maintain that we still had that hurdle to overcome. But the basis of the vote, the overwhelming vote to go forward was on the intelligence that was given by the intelligence community, not only to this Congress but, I assume, to the administration.

I believe it is imperative, Madam Speaker, that we have a special investigation, a special prosecutor to investigate what the intelligence community and officials knew, what information they gave to Congress, what information they withheld. We need to know for sure what information they had, definitive information, about the weapons of mass destruction. The American people need to know, first of all; the United States military needs to know; the United States Congress needs to know; and certainly all of the families of the loved ones of those who we mourn who lost their lives need to know.

Madam Speaker, I am unsure of what the intelligence community knew.

They stand now to say that they have documentation; but 2 months now have gone by, and we have found no weapons of mass destruction.

Many would say we as Members stand on the floor of the House and put ourselves in jeopardy because tomorrow we could find the weapons of mass destruction. I am not in an argument with my government. I hope my government is a government of truth, and whatever they find, it will be in conjunction with the work that they are doing on behalf of the American people.

But it was represented to us that because of the weapons of mass destruction that Saddam Hussein had, this Nation was under imminent threat.

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And so the President used his powers to go forward. Without the declaration of war of this Congress, Members of this Congress cried on the floor of the House because they were so conflicted with the idea that they must do what is right for the American people and go forward with war, because they believed in the information that was given.

In order for this Nation to be a true democracy, for the Constitution to prevail, for us to be a shining example of transparency in this Nation, it is important that we find out the truth. I do not believe we have the truth today. And I think it is imperative that even if Congress investigates this, because we have a one-party government, I think it is imperative that we have a special prosecutor to investigate and/or commission to investigate the tragedy of the war and as well the information that has been given to us.

Madam Speaker, I believe we can do no less to unveil the truth as our troops are fighting for us in Afghanistan and fighting for us in Iraq, as they are offering their lives for the ultimate principles of freedom and justice. It is imperative, again, must I say, that we have the truth. I hope that the administration listens, a special prosecutor, a special independent commission to investigate the existence of weapons of mass destruction and what the intelligence community knew.

#### ERASED CHILD TAX CREDITS HURT MILITARY FAMILIES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BLACKBURN). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WATSON. Madam Speaker, it is shameful enough that the Republican leadership in Congress has chosen to gamble our children's future on a risky and unsustainable tax scheme such as the one signed into law just a few weeks ago; but what is even more shameful is that Republicans sold out the very men and women who recently fought for our country in Iraq by cutting many of them out of the tax cut.

That is right, only hours before Congress was set to vote on President Bush's big tax giveaway, Republicans cut out provisions to expand the child tax credit for working families in order to give the President's wealthy friends a bigger tax cut.

The child tax credit provisions Republicans erased would have benefited millions of working families, including many families of American soldiers, sailors, and airmen just as they returned from war.

Just this weekend we had POW Shoshana Johnson in the Los Angeles area. During the time she was a prisoner of war, her family who lives in my district held a vigil. They tied those beautiful pink ribbons around the trees in the neighborhood so no one would forget that Americans were held hostage and were captives in Iraq.

So it is outrageous, and my outrage grows when I hear members of the Republican leadership suggesting that we are formulating a new welfare program. I am talking about and referring to working families. I am referring to those who have served their country in a land so far away many cannot even find on a map, in a land that did not have any concrete connection to 9-11, in a land that was headed up by a dictator who was not friendly with Osama bin Laden and we supposedly were going to have terrorism. But still, our troops went over under the command of the Commander in Chief, and they did an exemplary job.

This is the reason why we have set up an institute in Los Angeles that will work with the school district and will work with the community and it is an institute named after Shoshana Johnson, called the Institute for Heroism, Endurance and Patriotism. She had a daughter. Should she have been killed, as was rumored, that daughter would be in the care of someone else or maybe a part of the welfare system. I do not know, but she has a strong family. So in the name of the POWs, in the name of our veterans, we must vote to restore the deleted provisions that have helped millions of Americans and their children and our people who are still in Iraq and they have families back home.

Believe me, their incomes currently make them eligible for Federal programs. We must be sure that they too can take advantage of the child tax credit because, indeed, they are working people. We owe it to them. They deserve it.

#### AMERICA'S REPUTATION AS PEACEMAKER IS DOUBTED

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Madam Speaker, to win the war on terrorism ultimately America must be able to make more friendships and reduce the number of enemies that face us. In places very far from home, friendship is a matter of